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ABSTRACT

This paper presents formats for activities and sources of materials which focus on developing students' listening skills and their awareness of the steps in the listening process. The activities are intended for the early stages of language learning and are divided according to their appropriateness for intensive or extensive listening. Intensive listening involves recognizing an auditory pattern that was formed mentally the first time a particular word or structure was recognized. Three types of activity are suggested to develop the intensive listening skill: (1) activities appropriate for the presentation of new structural or vocabulary items: (2) activities that focus on structure alone; and (3) activities that focus on listening for the message. Extensive listening is more general: it deals with unknown material and comes from a variety of sources. The activities designed to develop extensive listening skills focus on: (1) developing passive vocabulary: (2) increasing the ability to cope with unfamiliar material: (3) developing the ability to derive meaning from words and phrases rather than from a word-by-word dissection; and (4) developing the ability to listen selectively. (AMH)

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Focus on Listening

by Helen Davies

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is an edited version of the paper presented by the author during her workshop at the Modern Language Council's Annual Conference on October 19, 1979.

What do the recently published Alberta Education curriculum guides for the six- and nine-year French programs have to say about listening comprehension? In Grade 7, listening comprehension activities will occupy approximately 40% of class time. In Grade 8, this proportion is reduced to 30% as the skills of speaking and reading consume more time, and in Grade 9, listening comprehension activities occupy only 25% of class time.[1] In the senior high school grades this proportion does not decrease further.

The relationship of listening comprehension to the other three skills of speaking, reading, and writing is described in Annex A - "Teaching and Learning Strategies - Basic Assumptions":

> More emphasis should be placed on providing students with the opportunity to use the language in situations representative of those encountered in everyday life . . . The view taken in this curriculum is that exercises and activities which encourage students to exchange with others,

[1]Alberta Education, *Six-Year French Program: Curriculum Guide*, (1979), p.9.

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messages of real interest to them, should be introduced from the beginning of the language program.[2]

For messages to be "of real interest" they must not be predictable. It is no small task for the teacher to create situations where students at the beginning grades can competently create and receive such messages, considering their very limited experience with the structures and vocabulary of the second language. One of the aims of this paper is to present some formats for exercises where "messages of real interest" may be exchanged, and to suggest some sources of material which will be appropriate for the beginning stages of the study of French as a second language.

A second assumption described in the curriculum guide is that:

> As students vary in their predisposition toward oral and visual means of learning, it is desirable to appeal to as many of the senses as possible and avoid a single approach for all students . . . The second language may be introduced through listening and speaking but reading and writing should follow early, specifically to reinforce listening and speaking.[3]

Listening comprehension, then, is probably the initially-acquired skill; but students will not be solely dependent on listening to receive information, as they may have been in the past. This "four skills approach" also means that all four skills must be developed early. The student who comes to us with a predisposition to receiving information visually rather than aurally should, during his stay with us, develop his ability to listen. To develop this "autonomy of the ear," new material must be presented aurally first. In order to develop aural skills, we must deliberately focus attention on them.

This paper will concentrate on formats for activities and sources of materials which focus on developing the listening skills and the student's awareness of the listening processes. We will concentrate on the early years of the student's contact with the second language, where it is most difficult to find listening material of real interest at a level appropriate for the beginner.

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[2]Alberta Education, p.86.

[3]Alberta Education, p.86.

What is Listening Comprehension?

Let us concentrate on specific objectives for listening activities. What do we want the students to do? If we can describe the process, or rather the processes, involved in listening, we can define objectives and create appropriate formats for activities. The skill of listening has been much underestimated. It was once labelled a "passive" skill, but it is passive only to the extent that it does not involve the physical activity of writing or speaking. The mental activity involved can be intense, particularly at the early stages of language learning. Evidence of this is the exhaustion of students after ten minutes of intensive listening activities. The mental processes involve "an interplay of guessing, approximation, expectation and idealization."[4] We could also add selection and memory to this list and, at more advanced levels, interpretation and critical appraisal.

Now let us look at the time limits involved. It is the speed at which comprehension must take place that distinguishes listening from the other three skills. Without a tape recording, there is no record for reference once the words have been spoken. Certainly the students possess the listening skill in their first language, but they are not aware of the processes involved. As they are unconscious of these processes, the students set unrealistic and impossible expectations for themselves — at some miraculous moment, they will understand it all! It is small wonder that their self-confidence drops and that they resort to trying to memorize everything. The following figures show how inappropriate our goals may be. Native speakers actually retain very little of what they hear, something like 20%, and that increases to only 28%, on the average, if they know that they will be tested.[5] Part of the teacher's task is to assist students in establishing appropriate goals by which to measure their progress, so that they may gain some satisfaction and self-confidence. For this reason it is helpful to describe to the students, in simple terms, the objective of a particular exercise prior to working on it.

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[4]William S.Y. Wong, "The Basis of Speech," in *The Learning of Language*, ed. Carroll E. Reed (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1971).

[5]Wilga M. Rivers, *A Practical Guide to the Teaching of French* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p.58.

In order to establish some organization of the listening exercises discussed in this paper, let us make a distinction between "intensive" and "extensive" listening activities. Intensive listening activities are those which focus on particular sounds or structural elements of the language. They are short and frequently informal. They are often a step in a sequence which aims at a skill other than listening: work on pronunciation or oral reading, the presentation of a new structure or vocabulary, or generalizing and reinforcing a grammatical notion.

Extensive listening activities generally focus on the meaning rather than the form of what is being listened to. This type of activity may have specific objectives such as the ability to cope with passages containing unknown material, the ability to anticipate and guess meaning, the ability to listen selectively for particular information, fluency in listening, and the development of a bank of passive vocabulary and structures.

We can group the "Minimum Expectations for Skill Development" outlined in the curriculum guide into these two categories. The objectives of "intensive listening" include the ability to:

1. distinguish phonetic differences within the French sound system.
2. demonstrate understanding of familiar questions, statements and instructions which incorporate the basic elements of the program.
3. demonstrate understanding of new combinations of structures and vocabulary of the program.
6. perceive the intonation and stress patterns used by the speaker, his intent, feelings, and emotions.

The objectives of "extensive listening" include the ability to:

4. grasp the general meaning of material containing cognates and a limited number of unfamiliar lexical items.
5. understand a variety of speakers in structural situations.[6]

[6]Alberta Education, p.5.

Intensive Listening Activities

1. Listening activities as a step in the presentation of new elements (structures or vocabulary).

The following description of the way we listen is very useful as an explanation of the persistence of pronunciation errors, and very relevant as a description of the place of listening activities in the presentation of new material.[7] Listening is not a process of hearing the actual sounds spoken. Instead, it is a process of recognizing an auditory pattern or image which was formed mentally the first time the particular word or structure was recognized. Once this image is established, it is unlikely to be changed by hearing the word or structure repeatedly. We could label this process of recognizing auditory images "idealization." When a student is forming this "auditory image," that is, when he first comes in contact with the word or structure aurally, the formation of an accurate image is only one of his concerns. He is also anxious to discover the meaning (usually in English) and memorize it. He is trying to perceive a pattern and how the pattern changes, and he is preparing to say the word. If we can decrease the number of tasks required of the student at this point, we increase the chances of him forming an accurate auditory image. If we are presenting a new structure, we should ensure that it does not incorporate vocabulary that is also new. We can build into our presentation a listening stage where the student's attention is focussed on sound, but where he will not be required to produce the word or structure orally. The following formats may be used as part of the presentation of a verb conjugation:

a) Write down the number of syllables in each of the following:

Je travaille
Il travaille
Nous travaillons
Ils travaillent

b) Write down the group of words which contains the sound /ø/:

Nous voulons
Vous voulez
Ils veulent

[7]Author's Note: Unfortunately, I do not know the origin of this description.

c) Write down the group of words which ends with a consonant (nasal vowels have been previously described):

Je viens
Il vient
Vous venez
Ils viennent

As part of the preparation for pronunciation work, you might use the following formats:

a) Listen to the following words and indicate whether they contain the sound /ɑ̃/ as in quand, or the sound /ɛ̃/ as in vingt:[8]

Comment
Quinze
Dimanche

b) Put a stroke through the vowels which are reduced:

Je peux partir.
Je n'ai pas de bureau.
Je ne le regarde pas.

c) Indicate with a curved line each example of liaison which you hear:[9]

Des autos
Trois élèves
Deux enfants
Vous êtes
C'est un cinéma.
C'est une moto.

d) The following type of exercise is used prior to the student's first contact with exercises in the written language:

In French many letters are not pronounced. Some letters that are often silent are"s," "t," "x" and "e." Listen to the following examples and look at them as they are being read out loud. Stroke out the letters you do not hear:[10]

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[8]S. Robert McConnell, Rosemarie Siroux, and Rick Porter, *Vive Le Francais - Teacher's Edition* (n.p., Addison-Wesley, n.d.), p.T46.

[9]McConnell, p.T46.

[10]McConnell, p.T46.

Voilà François et Marie.
Ce sont des disques.
Qui est-ce?

Je suis
Vous êtes
Ils sont
Ils écoutent

These formats for listening activities focus the student's attention on one particular element and require a response, but not an oral response. Hopefully, the oral work which follows these activities will be more accurate.

2. Listening activities which focus on structure.

By way of introduction to these activities let us look at another of the assumptions of the curriculum guide: "More importance should be accorded to assisting students to understand the structure of what is to be learned."[11] Through listening activities we can assist the students to perceive the new structure and we can sensitize the students to the parts of the sentence or parts of the word which are the most significant in the new language. Listening activities can also help students to make generalizations about the language, in terms of what they hear rather than in grammatical terms. It is these generalizations which enable us to subconsciously select the most significant sounds from the chain of sounds which are spoken.

The problem of gender in French is an example of a new sensitivity which the learner must develop. The following exercises focus on the clues indicating gender:

a) Raise your hand when I refer to someone feminine:

C'est un étudiant.
C'est un étudiant.
C'est un étudiant.
C'est une étudiante.
Ce sont des étudiants.

b) Raise your hand when I refer to something feminine:

Il est à la cafétéria.
Il est au bureau.
Il est à la discothèque.

[11]Alberta Education, p.87.

You may wish to use unfamiliar nouns in order to focus more sharply on the article which indicates gender.

c) Indicate whether the noun in the following sentences would use "un" or "une":

Je n'ai pas de livre vert.
Je n'ai pas d'auto verte.
Je n'ai pas de chapeau vert.

To encourage the generalization that feminine adjectives usually sound longer than masculine adjectives you may wish to vary the adjective as well.

One of the first problems a student must cope with when learning verbs is the transposition of the subject pronoun between question and answer. The following exercises are taken from *Vive le Francais:*[12]

a) Listen to the following conversations between a Customs Officer and tourists. Indicate whether you hear the pronoun tu or vous in the questions, and je or nous in the answers:

Tu es de Paris?
Oui, je suis de Paris.

Vous êtes de Montréal?
Non, nous sommes de Québec.

b) Listen to the following conversations and indicate whether the questions are being directed to just one person or more than one person:[13]

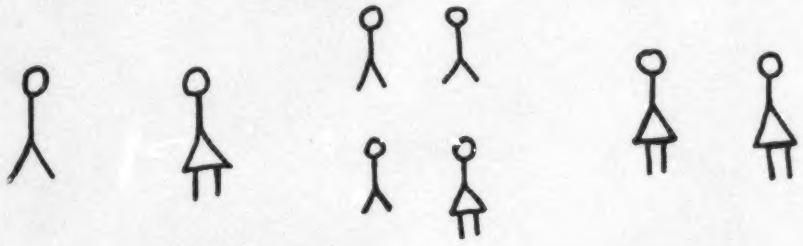
Tu est d'ici?
Oui, je suis d'ici.

Vous êtes de Toronto?
Non, nous sommes de Windsor.

[12]McConnell, p.T43.

[13]McConnell, p.T44.

Try the following formats to sensitize the listeners to clues of number:



1. 2. 3. 4.

Write down the number of the group I'm talking about:

Ils écoutent de la musique.

Elle étudie.

Elles arrivent.

Où est-ce qu'il arrive?

Ils veulent travailler.

Elle veut partir.

Qu'est-ce qu'il veut faire?

This kind of format may be used to focus on possessive adjectives, articles, or adjectives as clues to gender and number.

The following exercise focuses on tense: Write down aujourd'hui if what I am saying is happening now,
hier if it happened in the past,
demain if it is something that is going to happen:

J'ai vu le film.

J'écoute mes amis.

Je vais voir le film.

Je veux voir le film.

This type of exercise may concentrate on contrasting the structure of verbs in the present and passé composé, or it may focus on the semantic differences between veux/vais, veut/va. Again, in this exercise there can be advantages to using vocabulary which is unfamiliar to students in order to encourage generalizations about how the various tenses sound:

Ils ont amassé de l'argent.
Nous amassons de l'argent.
Je vais célébrer la victoire.

Dictations can be a useful listening exercise. They have the inherent problem of involving so many different types of knowledge of the written and spoken language that they are difficult to mark. However, they can be very useful in two modified forms, and may be used as a teaching tool rather than as a vehicle for assessment. The following sentences are exceedingly short and involve no vocabulary problems. Most of the value of this exercise lies in the manner in which each sentence is corrected immediately after the students have written it down.

Je les écoute. (If you had written *je l'ai*, what should have followed?)
Je l'ai écouté.
Je les ai écoutés.
Je vais les écouter.

In this exercise beware of the problem of agreement of the past participle with the preceding direct object. You may not wish to deal with the agreement problem at this point.

The second type of modified dictation is the "dictée à trous." Students are given a copy of the passage to be dictated, but critical parts of the passage have been removed. These may be verb endings, articles, adjectives, etc.:

J'aime les autos italiennes..... et l'auto ..anglaise.. mais j'ai acheté un camion ..américain.....

By means of structural exercises such as the above, we encourage students to make generalizations by which they can select the most significant part of the sentence, and to a certain extent predict some of the elements to follow.

* * *

The following are some useful "rules of thumb":

a) Your chances of finding exactly the exercise you need in a reference book are very small. At best, you may find a useful format into which you can insert the vocabulary which is appropriate for your class. To make an exercise, start with the question: "From the student's point of view, what are the sounds which must be distinguished?"

b) Some of the formats described here may be used for testing listening comprehension, but beware of the danger that instructions may become so complex you are testing the ability to follow instructions rather than the listening ability in the second language. For tests use only those formats which are familiar to students.

c) At the first stage of contact with a new structure use only vocabulary which is familiar to students. However, you may wish to use unfamiliar vocabulary at later stages to focus student attention on the most significant clues; for example, those of tense or gender.

d) The formats illustrated here contain only very short segments of language. However, it is dangerous to allow students to become used to such short segments. As they progress, include longer, more complex segments by adding the negative, interrogative structures, or modifiers.

e) All of these exercises are short and sharply focused on a particular element of language. They play the role that scales, exercises, and repeated practice of several bars of music play in learning to play an instrument. However, such exercises can be boring and mechanical. There is a wider view of listening comprehension activities which is equally important.

3. Listening for the message.

These activities use familiar material which has to be almost completely understood for students to respond correctly. They differ from earlier described intensive listening activities categories in the variety of responses they ask of the students. Hopefully, they are more enjoyable.

a) Sound effects.

During the second or third hearing of a passage, students provide appropriate sound effects. Imagine the possibilities of the following passages:

Moi, le bruit, je n'aime pas ça. C'est de la pollution. Ca commence le matin à sept heures avec mon reveille-matin. Je me lève et je vais dans la cuisine. Ma soeur crie: "Où sont mes souliers?", mon frère crie: "Où sont mes livres?", mon père crie: "Où sont mes clés?" et mon chien jappe.

Dans la rue, les autos, les motos, les autobus font du bruit. J'arrive à l'école, les étudiants crient. La cloche sonne dans les salles de classe. Le soir, à la maison, ma soeur écoute de

la musique, mon père regarde la télévision et mon frère écoute la radio. Et mon chien jappe....[14]

Sa lampe de poche à la main, Denis descend au premier étage. La voix attire Denis vers la cave. "Suivez-moi... Suivez-moi..." Denis ouvre la porte de la cave. Denis descend lentement à la cave. Il a peur. La voix est très claire maintenant. Elle répète "Suivez-moi... Suivez-moi... Suivez-moi..."

Denis est complètement effrayé. Il remonte vite l'escalier, puis il barre la porte de la cave. Il essaie le téléphone. Rien.[15]

b) Following directions.

Students are asked to draw the situation they hear described:

Dans la salle de classe, il y a trois bureaux. Sur le premier, il y a des lunettes. Dans le deuxième, il y a des livres, et, sous le troisième, il y a une étudiante.

Students may be given a map of a city or town and they are asked to mark in the route which they hear described:

Maintenant vous êtes à l'entrée du magasin Eatons. Vous regardez le cinéma en face. Tournez à gauche, vers la rue St. Catherine. Prenez la rue St. Georges, jusqu'à la deuxième avenue. Traversez cette avenue et tournez à gauche. Quel est le cinquième magasin?

c) Problem solving.

Students usually need to hear the text several times before they can answer:

Il y a cinq bâtiments dans la rue. Le premier est un restaurant. Le dernier est un cinéma. A gauche du cinéma, il y a un magasin de livres. Le magasin de skis n'est pas juste à côté du magasin de livres. Où est le bureau de poste? Quel bâtiment est le deuxième?

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[14]Pierre Calvé, *Le Français international: Livre 2*, deuxieme version (Montréal: Centre Educatif et Culturel Inc., 1972), p.55.

[15]McConnell, n.p.

It is possible to use student-composed material in such an exercise. Have students write a paragraph describing their own family or their clothing. Collect and correct these paragraphs and redistribute the better ones to students other than their owners. The owners must then be identified.

A simpler and more elementary version of this same exercise is to have all students write their own phone number on a slip of paper and put the slips in a hat. Each student must identify his own or a friend's phone number when it is read out.

d) Recorded announcements.

Recorded announcements in French are available by phone from such companies as Air Canada. Students will find it rather difficult to follow the announcement at first, so it is advisable to work with a tape recording in class. Then, as a homework assignment, students are asked to bring a list of flight numbers and arrival times for a different date.

Extensive Listening Activities

This group is distinguished from intensive listening activities by the following characteristics:

a) The listener focuses on the ideas expressed, rather than the form or structure through which they are expressed.

b) The students listen selectively for particular information.

c) The objectives of extensive listening activities include the development of the ability to cope with unknown material, fluency in listening, anticipation, guessing and approximation and the development of a bank of passive vocabulary.

d) The listening material will contain some unknown elements and will come from a variety of sources such as radio interviews, news reports, songs and the sound tracks of short films.

In these activities, as in the intensive listening activities discussed earlier, the student will need assistance in setting appropriate goals for himself. It is advisable to indicate in simple terms at the outset of the exercise the specific objective of the exercise. Without this help, most students, when confronted with unknown or difficult material, anxiously try to memorize sections of it, without comprehending it. In the remainder of this paper, we will suggest some specific objectives for extensive listening activities:

1. Developing a Bank of Passive Vocabulary.

In a second language, speaking is to some extent easier than comprehending what we hear, since as the speaker we have control over the vocabulary and structures used. The listener, on the other hand, must cope with the speaker's choice of material. The listener must understand more vocabulary and structures than he will ever use. How can we expand the student's passive vocabulary? Reading in our first language is a possible source. However, for many of us, the contact with the new material is visual rather than aural. The recognition of cognates is a tempting area for vocabulary expansion. Recognition is easier visually than aurally. However, once students become accustomed to the rhythm of the second language, this recognition process becomes easier. Only increased contact with the spoken language will remove its strangeness. Students will listen to French radio or television outside of class time if we can make it easier for them and set tasks which are possible for them. In class, then, let us get them started. The news reports are a useful source of material, containing many cognates and official titles which are recognizable. The reports frequently follow the same patterns of sentence structure, and the same topics keep recurring. For example: *"Le premier ministre fédéral, M. Joe Clark, a déclaré,* & complement of time & *que* & subject...." or *"Le chef du gouvernement americain / canadien / de l'Union Sovietique..."*
The May 1979 issue of the *Canadian Modern Language Review* contains a very useful vocabulary list for news broadcasts in French.[16] The list may be too comprehensive for your students, but you may select from it.

2. Developing the Ability to Cope with Unfamiliar Material.

This category includes developing skills of approximation and guessing. We will call these "attack skills." Students also need to develop the tolerance for partial comprehension which they have in their first language. The following is part of a lesson plan for developing these attack skills. We were listening to the following news item:

> *Le Président Carter et son épouse ont accueilli le Pape Jean-Paul II cet après-midi, à la Maison Blanche. Le souverain Pontife devait ensuite s'entretenir privément pendant une*

[16]Anthony C. Lister, "A French News Broadcasts Vocabulary List and Further Thoughts on Teaching Listening Comprehension," *Canadian Modern Language Review*, Vol. 35, No. 4, (May, 1979), pp.654-660.

heure avec le chef du gouvernement américain. Quelques minutes avant l'arrivée de Jean-Paul II à Washington, un homme, armé de trois revolvers, se rendit sans résistance aux autorités policières. L'homme, dont on ignore toujours l'identité, a été appréhendé dans le square Lafayette, face à la résidence présidentielle où des milliers de personnes ont amassé pour acclamer le chef de l'Eglise catholique.

a) Establish context.

Listen to the tape recording of the news item two times.

Quels mots, quels noms est-ce que vous avez entendus?
(Carter, Jean-Paul II.)

Listen again:

Qui est le chef du gouvernement américain?
(Carter)

Qui est le chef de l'Eglise catholique?
(Jean-Paul II)

Qu'est-ce que c'est que la résidence présidentielle?
(la Maison Blanche)

b) Help students to guess unknown sections, sentence by sentence.

Sentence 1. *"Le Président Carter et son épouse ont accueilli le Pape Jean-Paul II cet après-midi, à la Maison Blanche."*

Quels sont les noms dans la phrase?
(Carter, Jean-Paul II)

Qu'est-ce que Carter a fait à Jean-Paul II?
(Il... ont accueilli Jean-Paul.)

"Ont accueilli," c'est un verbe au pluriel. Qui a accueilli le Pape?
(No answer)

"Son épouse," c'est une personne, une chose, ou une action?
(Une personne)

Sentence 2. Listen again. *"Le souverain Pontife devait ensuite s'entretenir privément pendant une heure avec le chef du gouvernement américain."*

Qu'est-ce que Jean-Paul a fait avec Carter?
(Il a parlé....)

Sentence 3. Listen. *"Quelques minutes avant l'arrivée de Jean-Paul à Washington, un homme, armé de trois revolvers,*

se rendit sans résistance aux autorités policières."

Quels mots est-ce que vous avez entendus?	*(policiers)*
Replay	*(trois revolvers)* *(armé de trois revolvers)* *(un homme armé de...)* *(l'arrivée.)*
Replay to establish order of these words	*(students recognize incident)*

Sentence 4.

Où était l'homme armé de trois revolvers?
Où est la résidence présidentielle?

Replay sentence. *"L'homme, dont on ignore toujours l'identité, a été appréhendé dans le square Lafayette, face à la résidence présidentielle où des milliers de personnes ont amassé pour acclamer le chef de l'Eglise catholique."*

Le square, c'est un mot anglais.	*(Le square Lafayette)*
Où est la résidence présidentielle?	*(en face du square)*
L'homme, où etait-il?	*(dans le square)*

c) Discussion

By this stage students were becoming tired of the exercise. The passage was replayed and the question asked: "Is the French faster or slower now?" *"Slower"* -*"Why?"* This led to a short discussion of why French appears to be "fast" and the realization that the impression of speed decreases with comprehension.

* * *

Some suggested "rules of thumb" for such a lesson on attack skills:

a) Leave some sections only partially understood to develop a tolerance for partial comprehension, and to indicate that it is not necessary to understand or recognize every word that one hears.

b) Do not ask students for "key words". To produce key words, it is necessary to have understood all of the passage and to have summarized it in words which occurred in the passage - a

formidable task! Instead, start from the words which the students remember hearing.

c) Replay short segments of the tape. In the sample lesson described above, sentence three was too long a segment and students could initially recall only words from the last part of the sentence. In a case such as this, it is often effective to start working at the end of the sentence, rather than at the beginning of it.

d) In choosing passages for such a listening exercise, beware of passages which require some sophistication in general knowledge. In such cases students will not be able to use context to guess meanings.

e) By discussion in English at the end of the exercise you can help to set realistic goals for students to assess their own progress. The above sample lesson was given early in the year to two French 20 classes and to two French 11 classes. The French 20 students, who had had some training in guessing in the previous year, coped with the material much more comfortably than the French 11 students who had been studying French for a longer period of time.

3. Developing "fluency in listening."

"Fluency in listening" may be defined as the ability to absorb meaning from phrases and parts of sentences, rather than concentrating on a word by word dissection of the passage heard. The choice of material is very important for this kind of activity. It is best to work with stories such as those told to small children. Translate these into French using vocabulary and structures that are on the whole familiar. This may involve slight modifications to the story line. Students know the story, and can anticipate the plot and the repetitious elements. They particularly enjoy the story if it is told with all the gestures, facial expressions, and exaggerated suspense one uses when telling stories to small children. In such an atmosphere, the students require little encouragement to join in on the repeated sentences - thereby confirming their comprehension. Little Red Riding Hood and The Three Bears are very effective stories in this type of activity. Songs such as "Mon Pays" have a repeated refrain which is useful for the same purpose. In such a case, use only the refrain for the listening exercise.

Teachers frequently hear the complaint: "It's too fast." We can accommodate this complaint to the extent of repeating segments (but not at a slower speed) or breaking the material into

small segments. However, avoid dissecting any passages into single word units or repeating them at an unnaturally slow speed. To some extent, the speed at which the students can comprehend a listening passage is a matter of habit, as well as a matter of how much of the passage they comprehend.

4. Developing the ability to listen selectively.

This section could equally well be entitled "developing memory or recall" since the ability to recall what we have heard depends on how efficiently we have selected the most important information from the passage. We can make this process easier for the students by describing to them, before they hear the passage, its context and the type of responses we will ask of them. The questions will assist in the selection process. Alternatively, establish the format or organization of the passage after the first one or two playings of the tape. For example, in the case of a weather forecast, establish the elements and the areas described. Then have students fill in a table after they have heard the passage again. Similarly, in the case of a sports broadcast, establish first the sports and the teams involved. Remember that native speakers retain only about one fifth of what they hear in their own language. Beware, also, that in asking for responses which will indicate recall, you are not setting a formidable task in oral or written expression in the second language. By means of multiple choice questions you can check students' recall without involving other skills.

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According to a study by Fred Genesee of three groups of Canadian school children, competence in listening comprehension is associated not only with motivation and attitudes as are reading, speaking, and writing, but also with high aptitude and I.Q., as well as frequency of exposure and attempts to use French.[17] Self-confidence in approaching listening activities will continue if we, the teachers, can assist students to set appropriate goals in listening comprehension. We may increase their frequency of exposure to French outside of class if listening activities in class help them understand some of the French they hear on radio or television.

[17]Fred Genesee, "Individual Differences in Second Language Learning," *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (February, 1978), pp.490-504.